

***DIALECTICA SCALARIELLA* (ZELLER, 1850) (LEP.: GRACILLARIIDAE)  
NEW TO THE BRITISH ISLES**

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**Abstract**

*Dialectica scalarielli* (Zell.) is added to the British list of the strength of a specimen taken in Kent in September 2004, details of life history and distribution are given.

**Introduction**

At a local microlepidoptera workshop on 8 January, Francis Solly produced an unidentified dead moth in a small tube which he had taken last September. When I saw this it was immediately recognised as a species near *Acrocercops*; reference to Parenti (2000) showed it to be *Dialectica scalarielli* (Zeller, 1850). The specimen was relaxed, pinned and set (although the cilia could not be spread) and the identification confirmed.

The species is a typical gracillariid, having long narrow wings and the antennae longer than the forewings, its wingspan is 8-11mm. The head is white. The costal half of the forewing is dark brown with some markings near the apex, and the dorsal half white, the clear dividing line becoming undulating in the outer half of the wing. There is a fine photograph of the species in Parenti (2000) and a line drawing in Medvedev (1990) who also illustrated male and female genitalia.

**Biology**

The species feeds on vipers bugloss *Echium vulgare* (Stainton, 1867) which is common at the Kentish locality where it was taken. It has also been recorded on several other *Echium* spp. and other members of the Boragacinae which do not occur in Britain. The larva mines on both sides of leaf, sometimes occupying the entire leaf surface. An illustration of the mine is given by Hering (1957) which is reproduced by Medvedev (1990). In the Mediterranean area there are up to three generations a year so the species will be as continuously brooded as the climate permits.

**Distribution**

*D. scalarielli* is a surprising addition to the British list since the species occurs in Southern Europe from the Iberian peninsula to Greece and Croatia. It also occurs in the Canary Islands, North Africa and the Middle East as far as Turkmenistan. It has been introduced into Australia and New Zealand. It is conceivable that it had extended its range northwards around the Atlantic coast of France where little recording is done. Whether this specimen was an occasional vagrant or is locally established remains to be seen. The sole British specimen, a female, was taken at m.v. light by Francis Solly on Kingsdown Beach on the east Kent coast, 27.ix.2004.

In the British checklist the species should follow *Dialectica imperialella* (Zeller) and in the numbering system of Bradley (2000) its number should be 311a.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Willy & Jurate de Prins for providing information and references.

### References

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### A very early record of the Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus* Geoff. (Lep.: Pieridae) in the Isle of Wight

Brian Ransom saw a Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus* on the exceptionally early date of 3 February at West High Down, Totland. On the same day two Red Admirals *Vanessa atalanta* L. were seen at Ventnor and a Peacock *Inachis io* (L.) at Porchfield. This is probably the earliest ever sighting of a Clouded Yellow in Britain. Whether it was a migrant or a home bred example remains a matter of conjecture although there were no migrant moths noted at the time and so it could have been a home bred example. This butterfly has been successfully overwintering along the South coast of the Island with the first imagines seen at the end of April. Barry Angell suggests that it could have hibernated in the nearby gorse thickets and Ian Rippey has the following comments: Regarding the speculation by Barry Angell about adult hibernation, there was a photo of an adult Clouded Yellow which appeared in the Butterfly conservation magazine *Butterfly Conservation News* (now called *Butterfly*) some years ago which was supposedly taken in February 1996 in mine adit in Cornwall. I also have an old book, *British Butterflies* by W. S. Coleman (Routledge, Warne & Routledge, 1860) which states 'The Clouded Yellow has been found hibernating in the chink of an old wall at the end of February, but I am not aware of its coming out again in the Spring, like the Brimstone'.

I should like to thank Ian Rippey and Barry Angell for their information and comments.— SAM KNILL-JONES, 1 Moorside, Moons Kill, Totland, Isle of Wight P039 OHU.